

Such Foolish People

Josephine Discusses the Presents They Give

Suddenly my Josephine lifted her tiny voice exclaiming: "Augustus!"

To which we made response as ever. "My love?"

Whereupon Josephine clasped her knee, sighed, shook her head, looked at the fire again and murmured: "Augustus! What 1-5-0-0-000ish things some persons buy for Christmas presents!"

She turned and lifted her wistful little mouth tremulous for my judgment upon this the fruits of her philosophy, and I kissed her then and there right tenderly, knowing that if I seemed to scoff or scorn the erudition of her saying or the depth of the view with which she regarded life her bright blue eyes would fill with tears and her gentle heart would break.

"Those folks next door"—began Josephine with a sniff.

She stopped so that we might sniff together a conjugal sniff of utter contempt and derision at the folks next door.

"Those folks next door!" repeated Josephine. "What do you suppose he bought her?"

"A new bonnet, I hope!" I cried with sudden energy.

"No, not a bonnet!" exclaimed Josephine.

"Augustus!"

To which we lovingly replied: "My love?"

"Augustus! You are smoking!"

I looked at her in sudden guilt with a pronouncement of what was now to come.

"Augustus!" she breathed.

"My love?"

"Augustus! Your smoking cap!"

With a feeling of despair and sorrow I arose to my feet, but Josephine's eye was on me and Josephine's mouth was drooping and I knew if I were to refuse her immediate request she would wither and droop like a gathered flower and her dream of love would end in darkest night.

Wherefore I went to the hall rack, placed my smoking cap upon my head and returned to Josephine. It was a round smoking cap of light blue velvet, such, I believe, as the gentry of Turkey wear and call *tasles* and it was trimmed with beads. On one side was a dragon rampant with his tongue stuck out—this detail being ingeniously executed with beads of a scarlet color—so that, being seen from this side, I was an inspiration of horror and the terror of all beholders. On the other side was a butterfly sipping honey from a flower and looking peaceful and pastoral beyond words—so that, being regarded from that side, I mightly bore reference to a joyful life, golden with the scent of new mown hay and musical with the lowing of the kine. The inspiring cap was crowned with a golden tassel which tickled my nose and my ears with a titillative impartiality that I could only escape by colling the tassel upon the top of the cap and balancing it there.

And thus equipped I sat me down to smoke.

"I never!" cried Josephine, clasping her knee again in transport. "I never saw such a handsome cap! Never! He looks so fierce!"

"The butterfly, my love?"

"Augustus! No! The dragon!"

I turned the saucy dragon to the back of my head so that Josephine could feast her eyes upon the butterfly, and then I smoked as though my tobacco was never so sweet as when I smoked it in my smoking cap.

"The moment I saw it I knew it was for you!" cried Josephine, "and I was so afraid that it would be sold before I could find a salesgirl to wait on me."

"But it wasn't."

"No! And Augustus! She was the nicest salesgirl! I told her, love, that your eyes were blue and she said it was just the thing for you. Oh, I was trembling with excitement. She said you would look so distinguished in it!"

The tassel slipped down and tickled my ear. I collied it back and smoked on.

"And what do you suppose she bought him next door?" laughed Josephine, and breathlessly answered, "A walking stick!"

The clock interrupted her by beginning to strike nine. It was the hour! Josephine gave me a solemn look and nod and immediately I fetched her jewel case.

With another solemn look Josephine unscrewed her earrings and placed them in the jewel case. Her ring followed. Lullingly then I gave her my scarf pin and sleeve links. Josephine solemnly locked the box and looked at me at last with a beaming eye.

"There!" said Josephine.

"There!" said I.

"Now you can sleep in peace," said my beloved, "and having nothing to harass yourself with either, like those silly persons who gave each other walking sticks and s-s-silver mounted carrying sets!"

And as we sat there, Josephine with her jewel case in her lap and I with my walking stick, the clock struck down again and again and again.

UP AMONG THE CLOUDS.

Some of the Novel Experiences Encountered by Balloonists.

Ballooning, delightful as it is in some of its aspects, is not all beer and skittles. Capt. Charles De F. Chandler, winner of the Lahm Cup and one of the contestants in the recent international race, says that he and his companions, in the course of their long flight, were fired at thirty times by farmers. The balloons frightened their chickens. Some of the shots struck the balloon but did no damage because of the long range. Poultry even at night seemed to have a sense of the passage of the balloon, making an outcry of alarm which could be heard by the aeronauts. The moonlight which prevailed during the race produced beautiful effects by its shining on masses of clouds below the voyagers. All scientific records for low temperature were broken during the flight from St. Louis. One instrument which recorded an altitude of nine miles recorded a temperature of 11 degrees below zero, the lowest natural degree of cold which scientists have any knowledge.—Leslie's Weekly.

A Peculiar Name.

There is a post hamlet in Cass County, Missouri, with nothing peculiar about it except its name, and that is Peculiar. Its origin, according to local traditions was as follows:

When the settlement had become sufficiently populous to need a postoffice, one of the prominent citizens sent a petition to Washington to have one established. In due course the petition was granted and he was asked to suggest a name that would please the people. He replied, "The people are not particular so long as the name is peculiar."

Thereupon the postoffice was christened Peculiar, and the name has never been changed.

Going to a Fire in a Missouri Town.

When the editor starts to run to a fire at night and runs into a tree in the middle of the walk, and boards fly up and bruise his shins, comes to a sudden stop off from eight to ten inches, which sends him sprawling into a pond of water and mud where a sidewalk ought to be, stumbles over a sudden raise in the walk, falls and smashes his nose on a broken board and then sprains his ankle by stepping in a hole where a board isn't, he begins to wake up and take interest.—Wayne Country Journal

Canal Across the Alps.

Signor Caminada, a hydraulic engineer, has drawn up a scheme for the construction of a canal to cross the Alps and connect Geneva with Lake Constance. The canal would be 360 miles long, existing water courses being used for 161 miles. It would allow the passage of vessels of 600 tons and the carriage of 15,000,000 tons of cargo per annum.

Tallest Tower; Biggest Clock.

When the clock is placed in the tower of the Metropolitan Life building in New York City, it will have the largest timepiece in the world. The diameter of the dial will be 37 feet. The letters on the dial will be 4 feet high, and the hands twelve feet long. The next largest clock in existence is "Big Ben," in Westminster Abbey, London which has a dial of 22 1/2 feet in diameter.

February 19 1908.

The calendar of 1908 shows a peculiarity in February not often to be seen. The first day of February fell upon a Saturday and the last of the month happens on the same day of the week. In February of 1908, therefore, there are five Saturdays. Similar conditions only happen once in 28 years.

Where Impoliteness Reigns.

New York men have just earned the reputation of being less polite in their treatment of women in public conveyances than are the men of other cities. Figures obtained from other cities show an average of 13 per cent of men seated while women are standing, and New York City shows about 70 per cent.

Longevity in Turkey.

According to the Medical Record Turkey's climate is productive of great longevity, or at least has that reputation. In Koni Baghchoha (presumably in Turkey) there is said to be now living at the advanced age of 134 years a government book-binder, whose father was 142 years old when he died.

Charity.

Charlton county has the most charitable citizen. While sawing logs he rulked a saw by striking a horsehoe which was imbedded in one of them. Still, he says he hopes the shoe brought good luck to whoever hung it on the tree years ago.—Kansas City Times.

The Stummers.

These European rummage sales of impecunious titled personages will keep up just as long as American betresses think that there is more in a title than in a man.—Poughkeepsie Star.

Back to Ram.

Mince pies are more injurious to health and morals than rum, according to Dr. Wiley, the food chemist. This is awful—to have to go back to rum again.—Auburn Citizen.

THE FISHERMAN'S PARADISE.

No Such Angling Sport can be Found Elsewhere in the World.

The fisherman's paradise in the United States is found at Miami, Fla. There are other tarpon grounds than Biscayne bay, but anglers who have found their way to the southernmost point of Florida year after year with flattering regularity, and some of whom have landed from five to ten huge 150 or 200 pounders in one day, contend that no such angling sport can be found elsewhere in the world, nor so many fish, as in the waters which lap the shores of the various keys which dot the bay and the Gulf Stream. There are over six hundred kinds of fish between Miami and Key West, and 150 of these are known as game fish. One of the fascinations of the game tarpon is that he is mysterious. He comes in schools, whence no one seems to know. He is sighted sometimes as early as January, but although he jumps and mockingly lashes his six feet or so of shimmering, silvery body in the eyes of the eager sportsman, he refuses to notice the most tempting bait. In February he begins to take the hook, and in this month anglers begin to arrive on the scene and to engage their boats and guides for the season.—Leslie's Weekly.

Reaching a Decision.

A commercial traveler tells an amusing experience which happened to him in the interior of Pennsylvania. The traveler landed in the village and sought the only hotel in the place—a small building not much larger than the average dwelling. He stepped on the porch but hearing voices raised in anger, he paused at the door. Apparently there was a quarrel in progress, and as the excitement showed no indication of diminishing, the traveler knocked loudly on the door.

"Hello!" he cried. "Who's the proprietor of this place?"

"Just ye stay where ye are," came in feminine tones from the house.

"Etern an' me is decidin' that pint now."

"Tuppence" the Dominating Amount.

Tuppence—meaning, of course, two-pence, and equal to the sum of four cents in United States currency—is the dominating sum in London. It is such an institution as the war debt, beer, or the game of cricket. Wherever you go, whatever you do, what ever you sell or whenever you open your mouth, it is tuppence or a series of that sum, that is extracted from you. Tuppence is as much as a fairly well-to-do worker can afford for his meal at midday. In the poorer restaurants that sum sets him two slices and a big mug, or three slices and a little mug, or a portion of cake and a drink, or a fried egg, slice and small mug or a rasher of bacon.

Why Toast is Popular.

The increasing popularity of toast, says the London Lancet, is a somewhat interesting fact in that it possibly indicates that after all the public resents the impidity of modern bread. Roller milling as now practiced, is altogether different from the old method grinding wheat between stones, leads to the elimination of the germ of the wheat. The peculiar nutty flavor of the old-fashioned loaf was due perhaps to the retention of this germ.

Indian Babies Don't Cry.

"Affection for children is an Indian character," says Dr. Charles E. Moody of Idaho. "I have never seen an Indian mother or father punish a child, nor have I ever seen an Indian child cry. An Indian child never sobs when hurt. Just an extra snap of the bright, black eyes and a slight frown is all to indicate to the observer that the little fellow is suffering. I have never heard even an Indian baby cry."

Workman's Poe.

Alcohol is the foe of the working man, inasmuch as it lessens his productive powers, thus lowering his efficiency as a workman. It renders him careless and indifferent as to the welfare of his family, and results in the children drifting into the workshop and factory at a time of life when they ought to be gaining the knowledge necessary to fit them for the circumstances of the future.—Co-operative News.

Johnson Grass.

If prejudice could be overcome, this is one of the most valuable hay grasses we have. It is at home in our climate and can be depended on to make a crop. It is akin to sorghum and partakes to some extent of sorghum's hardiness. Cut the grass early, just as the first heads appear. If too old it is of but little value.

Novel Fam.

One of the most curious "farms" in the country is conducted by Miss Abby Lathrop of Granby, Mass. She has a little place up among the hills where she raises mice, weasels, ferrets, rabbits, guinea pigs, and water rats. She has in her charge all told about 2,500 animals, and her enterprise has been a success.—Leslie's Weekly.

What He Had Missed.

"Gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Goodley, "just listen to that clergyman! I'm positive he's swearing. Evidently he's missed his vocation."

"No," replied her husband, "I think it was his brain."—Philadelphia Press.

A "Business Appointment"

By W. Lomax

It was 9 o'clock at night on December 23, the day before Christmas Eve, when Frank Maitland stepped out of the train at his native town and carried his shabby bag to the cloakroom. His movements were all marked with a sort of grim and desperate determination. He was like a man who had made up his mind after prolonged meditation to a given course of action.

He marched with quick step and lowered head through the familiar streets which he had not seen for five years, not daring to glance around him lest some one whom he had known in the old days should recognize and accost him.

By the nearer he got to the house the more vehemently he was assailed with doubts.

How could he tell the story of his shame to his father's honored friend? How could he ask for pauper relief in the house where he had once been the favorite guest?

But there was one gleam of consolation in all those dark and harassing thoughts. At all events he would be spared a meeting with Alice even if he succeeded in obtaining access to her father. She was certain to be married, to have been married long ago, and have left the old home. How could she fail to be married? Such beauty and gracious simplicity and charm—an heiress, too—must have had a score of eligible suitors to choose from.

So, struggling onward with bent head, like a man battling his way in the teeth of a storm, he eventually reached the house.

"Is Mr. Seymour at home? Could I see him for a moment? My name is Frank Maitland. I'm—I'm very sorry to trouble you."

"Mr. Seymour is dead. He died three months ago, sir."

"Dead!"

But the housekeeper was speaking to somebody in the dim-lit hall and Frank heard her reply to her unseen questioner.

"Yes, miss—Mr. Frank Maitland, miss."

"Frank! Is that really you, Frank?"

"Ye-es."

One of those white hands was stretched out to him, and he took it in his own with a feeling of awe that she should be willing to shake hands with him.

"Won't you come in, Frank?"

Then he found himself in the library seated before a blazing fire, with Alice sitting opposite him.

They were together and alone after five years.

A long silence had fallen between them. He had blurted out: "I've been in prison convicted on a charge of forging a check, and sentenced to five years' penal servitude, and am now out on ticket-of-leave."

He had not dared to look at her, and she had not spoken.

"You didn't know my shameful story Alice?" he ventured at last.

"Oh, yes, I did; father and I both knew it, and often talked it over together. We couldn't forget old friends as easily as all that," answered Alice reproachfully.

"But your father could have had no doubts about my being guilty of the crime for which I was condemned, Alice?"

"Yes, he had, Frank?"

"But I pleaded guilty?"

"Yes, I know; but father said that was just the sort of thing you might be expected to do. He said—No, Frank, I don't think I can tell you what father said exactly. He—"

"Alice, do please," he interrupted. "Well, perhaps I might. What he said was—"

She paused, faltered, and began again: "What he said was that to take the guilt upon yourself to screen a woman was just the sort of quixotic thing that a chivalrous young fool like Frank Maitland might have been expected to do."

He had been hoping against hope that he might be spared the necessity of broaching the real object of his visit. But there it was—she had changed him and he was forced to respond.

"You see, Alice," he said with desperate courage, "nobody cares to have a ticket-of-leave man about the place. Yet I had a forlorn kind of hope that your father would be different from other people, and might have lent me a helping hand to make a fresh start somewhere. But now—"

"I wonder if I could help you in any way?" she pondered aloud.

"But you don't want a secretary, Alice."

"Most certainly not," she replied with a sharp decision.

"Then I don't understand."

"Men never understand, Frank; but it does happen that I have an appointment in my gift which I am willing to place at your disposal."

"Alice!" he exclaimed. "How lucky!"

"What is it, Alice?"

"Husband to Alice Seymour, who has never ceased to love you, who has thought of you every day for the last five weary years, who has lived in the hope that this moment might come to her—Alice Seymour, orphan and, if you decline the appointment a lonely spinster forever."

Frank sprang to his feet.

"Alice!" he cried.

"What happened immediately afterwards is no business of anybody's."

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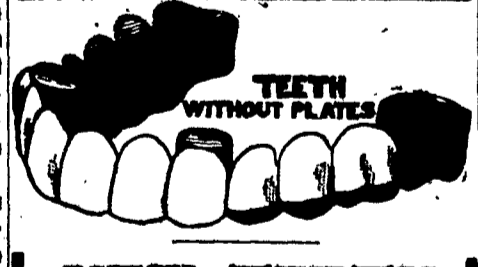
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